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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

December 1, 2021

John R. Serian  
County Manager  
PennDOT District 10  
Attn: I-80 Canoe Creek Bridges Project  
2550 Oakland Avenue  
Indiana, PA 15701-3388

Dear Mr. Serian:

I write to express my strong opposition to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Major Bridge Public-Private Partnership (P3) Initiative, which would establish tolls along nine bridges across the Commonwealth. This proposal includes the Canoe Creek Bridges in Beaver Township, Clarion County, which is in my congressional district.

As you are aware, the Public-Private Transportation Partnership Board approved the Major Bridge P3 Initiative on November 12, 2020. Counter to the legislative intent of the P3 model as authorized, there continues to be an unwavering march toward levying taxes upon the traveling public in the form of tolls, despite the unpopularity of the tolling proposal from the general public, stakeholders, and elected officials.

In the decades prior, Pennsylvania had been rejected three times by the Federal Highway Administration on their attempts to convert Interstate 80 to a tolled facility. Having been on the winning side of that battle, I was shocked to find out that PennDOT through the Public-Private Transportation Partnership Board, was heading in this direction yet again. To ensure the public were aware of the proposal, I have hosted a field hearing, telephone townhalls, and conducted surveys to solicit feedback from the public. According to my most recent survey, which was sent to nearly 12,000 constituents in Clarion County, 90 percent of those who responded opposed tolling along the Canoe Creek Bridges. Furthermore, in November 2020, PennDOT sought initial input on alternative funding options for Pennsylvania to fix its dilapidated infrastructure. Nearly 6,000 individuals participated in this opportunity and 375 comments were received by PennDOT. The overarching sentiment remains: Pennsylvanians oppose tolls.

My concerns remain that PennDOT has reached the foregone conclusion that tolls are required, despite not having conducted studies on safety, traffic diversion, local impacts, anticipated revenue or duration of tolling contracts, environmental impacts, or a host of other necessary items to make such a major policy decision. Coupled with the fact that the General Assembly has now passed legislation disapproving of the tolling plan, PennDOT should be looking at alternatives.

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It was recently revealed that PennDOT has been in consultation on a biweekly basis with the Federal Highway Administration for the past six months on the major bridge tolling proposal. I have called on PennDOT to provide the public with transcripts of these meetings so taxpayers can fully understand the impacts. Despite promises from Secretary Gramian for transparency throughout this process, we remain in waiting.

While there is no doubt that Pennsylvania requires a reliable funding mechanism to maintain and replace existing infrastructure, the Commonwealth collected nearly \$3 billion in revenue in October 2021. That is six percent higher than anticipated, which leaves a \$788.2 million budget surplus. Pennsylvania is expected to receive more than \$18 billion from the recent federal infrastructure package, including \$1.6 billion for bridge replacements. PennDOT should exhaust all funding avenues before placing an additional tax on the traveling public.

I remain deeply concerned that these shortsighted proposals will leave lasting negative impacts on the residents who live near these bridges, endanger the local community with truck diversion, and cause greater maintenance costs on local roads.

It is my sincere hope PennDOT reconsiders these haphazard proposals and provides commonsense alternatives to address Pennsylvania's aging infrastructure. I stand ready to work with all willing partners to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,



Glenn "GT" Thompson  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

cc: Yassmin Gramian, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
Joshua Clinger, Clarion County Manager, PennDOT District 10